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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SPLM DARFUR CONFERENCE POSTPONED

REFTEL: KHARTOUM 953

KHARTOUM 929

11. (SBU) The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) conference on Darfur has been postponed. No date has been set for the conference to begin. SPLM Task Force on Darfur (TFD) chair Rev. Clement Janda stressed that the SPLM's efforts will continue. Janda told Acting CG Juba June 18 that he had pressed Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) President Salva Kiir for a new date, but Kiir had declined to set one. Instead, Kiir reportedly counseled patience while other efforts played out, and while consultations with the Darfur parties continued.

12. (SBU) The postponement follows criticism of the SPLM for involving civil society, Arab groups and other Darfurian representatives in the first phase of its proposed three-phase conference. It also follows refusal by key Darfur leaders to attend the SPLM's conference (Ref. A).

13. (SBU) Janda denied reports, including one from another member of his task force, that Eritrea was blocking groups assembled in Asmara from participating in the SPLM conference. Eritrean officials Yemane Gharaeb and Abdullah Jabr were in Juba June 16, Janda said, and reported that dialogue among the Darfur factions in Asmara was continuing and "making progress." He said the Eritreans had asked for the SPLM conference to be postponed.

14. (SBU) Libya has, however, emerged as an obstacle, according to Janda and GOSS Minister for Regional Cooperation Barnaba Marial Benjamin. "They're not being helpful," Benjamin said June 17. Janda said he had received a fax from Darfurian commanders in Tripoli indicating that they did not plan to participate in the SPLM conference. Only last week, Janda claimed, a Libyan envoy had assured him there were no Darfurian commanders in Libya. Janda also expressed frustration with the French, whom he claimed had misled the SPLM about the June 25 Darfur conference in Paris. (Note: Other Embassy contacts confirmed the presence of some Darfur Peace Agreement non-signatories in Tripoli. End note.)